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EFFECTUAL MEANS

OF PROVIDING,

ACCORDING TO

THE EXIGENCIES OF THE EVIL,

AGAINST THE

DISTRESS APPREHENDED

FROM THE

SCARCITY AND HIGH PRICES

OF

DIFFERENT ARTICLES OF FOOD.

BY

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1800.

Barnard-Caſtle, County of Durham,
February 27th, 1800.

SIR,

I HAD the honour of ceiving, the 24th inſtant, your circular l er, concerning the means of remedying the preſent diſtreſs, occaſioned by the high prices of wheat and different articles of food, and which, it is much to be feared, will increaſe in the courſe of the year. As an anſwer is due on my part, I ſhall communicate at the ſame time, as deſired, my thoughts upon the ſubject, or rather hints, but which will be fully comprehended by you.

The ſubject may be conſidered under three different views. A famine, it may be ſuppoſed, may exiſt in the country before the

enſuing harveſt; which, however, appears to me an impoſſible event: there may be ſuch a great ſcarcity of different articles of food, as to produce general and extreme diſtreſs; laſtly, proviſions may be ſo dear, that the high prices of them may preſs grievouſly upon the middle orders, and exclude the lower ones, more or leſs, from the purchaſe of food neceſſary to their ſubſiſtence.

The occurrence of one or other of theſe caſes is, in the ordinary courſe of things, unavoidable in the kingdom, and therefore requires the attention of the legiſlature. The leaſt of theſe evils will be productive of a degree of miſery, which muſt excite ſerious alarm, from the proſpect of its long continuance. Permit me, therefore, in the ſubſtance of my letter, to advert to the two firſt of theſe caſes, as if there were ſubſtantial and ſolid grounds to be apprehenſive

of the actual exiſtence of one of them: for the means of relief are the ſame in both caſes. Upon the laſt caſe I will ſubjoin my thoughts in a poſtſcript. Previouſly it will be neceſſary, to attend to ſome of the particular queries in your letter, which I now proceed to anſwer.

In this place and neighbourhood the ſituation of the poor is truly melancholy; but, perhaps, that of many families, which, by their labour, or by means of ſome inferior trade, earned a fair and decent livelihood, before the time of the preſent ſcarcity, is ſtill more diſtreſsful. One half of the inhabitants of this place, the population of which conſiſts of about three thouſand perſons, is at preſent relieved by ſoup, or ſupported by the pariſh. The poor-rate, which laſt year was three ſhillings in the pound, is now nearly double.

In the neighbouring and fertile country eaſt of this town, one half at leaſt, but I am credibly informed two-thirds of the produce of laſt year's wheat, and, with a trifling exception, the ſtock which remained on hand of the preceding harveſt, are already conſumed. Many of the farmers, who every year grow a great quantity of wheat, have none left to bring to market; and ſeveral ſmall farmers buy at preſent their own bread-corn. The mining country, to the weſt of this place, is with difficulty ſupplied. Rye, at preſent, cannot be procured for it from Newcaſtle. The perſon who principally furniſhes it with bread-corn aſſures me, that of late he has not been able to purchaſe more than one-fifth of the quantity, which he uſually ſold to the inhabitants. Of the barley grown, and ſuitable for human food, a ſmall proportion remains unſold. A conſiderable quantity of the oats grown this

year

year has been ſold, but not, perhaps, equal to that of wheat above-ſtated.

Perſons, on whoſe authority I can depend, inform me, that the produce laſt year of wheat in this country, compared with the average crop of other years, was at leaſt one-half leſs in quantity, and one-third inferiour in quality; that is, a given quantity, which in former years ſupported a family three weeks, ſerves it this year only two; but, I apprehend, not two weeks: that oats have not failed as much in quantity as wheat, but equally or more ſo in quality: that, in both reſpects, barley was a much worſe crop, and peaſe and beans infinitely ſo. Prices have this day advanced in our market. I underſtand the deficiency of crops of grain has been greater in the eaſtern part of the county, but I cannot myſelf ſpeak to the fact.

My thoughts upon the means of preventing and remedying the evil, as this has been ſtated in the two firſt views above taken of the ſubject, will be ſuccinctly propoſed under the following heads, eight in number.

1. The agricultural grains commonly grown.
2. The different vegetables cultivated as auxiliary to grain. 3. A degree of compulſion, which, with your permiſſion, I ſhall call preſſing, to be employed in procuring an extraordinary ſupply of food for the poor, the enſuing ſpring and ſummer.
4. A general agency to be inſtituted for the purpoſe of carrying into effect any plan or means, which the legiſlature may think proper to adopt, for remedying the evil.
5. Importation of different articles of food into the kingdom. 6. Extraordinary advance of public money for affording relief in the preſent diſtreſs. 7. Finding proper ſuccedaneums within ourſelves, and not of

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the vegetable kingdom, for remedying the deficiency of the produce of corn. 8. The reſtoration of peace, which I take the liberty of including as a means, for the purpoſe of making an important obſervation.

The aggregate of the ſeveral means is what muſt conſtitute the remedy; and an aid, ineffectual in itſelf, may become very important, as a part of a plan of general relief. The meaſures requiſite, to give effect to the means of remedying the evil, ſhould be adopted without delay, for the diſtreſs is urgent; and ſome at leaſt of the means of relief will not be practicable, unleſs the neceſſary previous meaſures be taken early in the preſent ſeaſon. It is a more important general obſervation, not to employ many weak and ineffectual meaſures, which will only amuſe the people, and not relieve the

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real diſtreſs. A ſolid judgement is neceſſary, to decide upon the meaſures propoſed.

In reſpect to the firſt head, the agricultural grains commonly grown, ſuch as wheat, rye, barley, oats, peaſe, and beans.—It is very important, that the preſent ſtock of theſe in the kingdom, or which may be imported, be huſbanded with the greateſt care and attention; and all practicable means ſhould be employed, to make it go as far as poſſible in actual conſumption. On this account, I apprehend, that wheat-bread ſhould not be permitted, but as made of flour with the whole bran in it. This, as a general regulation, put into force every where in the kingdom, would conſiderably retard the conſumption. The fact is, that ſuch bread is a conſiderable ſaving in a family, however it may be accounted for. The bran in it is, no doubt, nutritive, in a greater or leſs

degree:

degree: it may, along with the flour, be more capable of aſſimilation into nutriment; and it muſt be ſerviceable in aid of the repletion, which the ſtomachs of many perſons require, greater than the quantity of aliment neceſſary for the ſupport of their bodies.

However, ſuch a regulation does not appear to be practicable in the ſouthern parts of the kingdom, as I apprehend, from the mills not being provided with the proper ſtones (uſually called the Derby or grey) for grinding wheat into that ſort of flour, which is ſuitable to be uſed with its bran in bread. Yet ſuch ſtones might readily be procured. In other parts of the kingdom, the Derby or grey ſtones are in all the milis, as well as the french ſort. Flour made with theſe, the very coarſe part of the bran only taken out, which is a very

trifling

trifling diminution, makes, with yeaſt, excellent good bread both in quality and taſte.

Bread baked ſome time before it is uſed, is much more ſerviceable; but as the poor conſume it as ſoon as it is baked, and are generally extravagant in the uſe of it, it had better be made for them, kept a proper time, even ſeveral days, and then ſold to them at a moderate price, under the direction of ſuitable agents for the purpoſe. In this mode, which is unqueſtionably ſuperiour to that of ſoup, the public liberality would be moſt advantageouſly diſtributed. For if corn can be had, the poor can hardly be expected to live without ſome bread. Bread is cheaper than animal food, and far leſs bread, than may be ſuppoſed, is ſaved by diſpenſing ſoup.

The poor, ſupplied with bread in the above manner, would not have to pay the profit of trade upon the ſmall quantities of corn they purchaſe weekly. Their time would not be loſt at markets, and impoſition in grinding would be prevented: they would, by the reſtricted diſtribution of it, be obliged to huſband their bread, and would not eat it new, but of a proper age, when it would go much farther. The corn or flour would be bought at the firſt hand, which would be a conſiderable ſaving; and being ſuppoſed to be brought in general from the ſea-ports, would tend much to reduce the high prices of the article in the inland markets.

There are different preparations and mixtures of food, to which it might be very proper to attend at this time, as making it go further, or as improving the quality

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of inferior ſpecies of food. There is a mode of uſing wheat and rye flour, pearled barley and oatmeal, to which the lower claſſes have frequently recourſe, and which ſaves, conſiderably, bread and other food. They boil any one of theſe in water, to which they add ſome milk, and a little treacle or coarſe ſugar, and conſume the whole meſs; and it is good as well as agreeable food. It might be uſeful to provide a quantity of theſe articles, and ſell them to the poor on moderate terms, for the above purpoſe ſolely. Such relief may be very acceptable, eſpecially if bread cannot be procured. Several poor or labouring families at preſent, who are not able to procure bread, have no other ſubſiſtence than rye-meal boiled in water, without the other uſual additions.

Perſons

Perſons of fortune, who can ſupply their families with other food, ſhould be called on in a particular manner to be ſparing in the uſe of wheat, and thus leave a greater quantity for the conſumption of the lower orders. Their families ſhould uſe little or no bread with animal food, when they have a ſufficiency of vegetables. Theſe ſhould be grown in their gardens in abundant quantities for the purpoſe. With potatoes, bread does not ſeem requiſite to meat: they ſhould ſtint the quantity of bread uſed in their families, and order it to be diſpenſed by a regular allowance. Flour ſhould certainly not be conſumed in articles of luxury, in hair powder, or in manufactures; and no doubt, at this time, too great a quantity of fine flour is made in the kingdom.

Other ſorts of grain ſhould be reſerved as much as poſſible for human food.

Barley

Barley bread, I underſtand, goes further in a labouring family than that of wheat, calculating upon the actual conſumption of different quantities of theſe grains, bought for a given ſum of money; and, no doubt, oats make a good and wholeſome cake. Few oats ſhould be given to animals, eſpecially to dogs. If judged neceſſary, racing ſhould be prohibited the preſent year; pleaſure horſes ſhould have no oats; and the cavalry ſhould be kept at graſs the enſuing ſummer, if not required for actual ſervice.

It is very important, to take proper precautions, leſt a late harveſt increaſe the evil of the preceding one. There is yet opportunity of ſowing rye on a larger ſcale than uſual, which may prove very ſerviceable, if wheat be late in coming to market. A greater proportion of the early-ripe kinds of barley and oats ſhould be grown on the

forward

forward lands, and proper meaſures taken for diſtributing ſuitable ſeed through the kingdom.

Whatever regulations the legiſlature has provided, or may think proper to provide at this time, in reſpect of publick markets, the ſelling of grain by proper meaſures, and the grinding of corn at a reaſonable price, ſhould be particularly enforced.

In reſpect to the ſecond head, the vegetables cultivated as auxiliary to grain;—— I refer to cabbages of the different ſpecies, and to turnips, as well as potatoes, all of which, if they could be procured, would be found very uſeful in actual dearth. If this be apprehended, they ſhould be provided according to the beſt modes of garden and field culture, on the largeſt ſcale poſſible for early conſumption. The means will be pointed out under the enſuing head.

The two firſt would prove very ſerviceable to the poor; with a very ſmall proportion of ſalt meat, they would be a very deſirable article of food in a time of famine, or great ſcarcity. In all families they would be of conſiderable ſervice, and, conſequently, leſſen the conſumption of bread. However, it is, perhaps, too late to have recourſe to growing of cabbages, and the evil is not ſo urgent as to oblige us to depend upon turnips; I therefore paſs them over, and will ſpeak more at large upon potatoes. Though early turnips would be very uſeful the enſuing ſummer, eſpecially in the caſe of a late harveſt, and a great quantity of them ſhould be grown. If not wanted for human food, they would be conſumed by cattle as uſual. In a ſhort journey yeſterday I had occaſion to go into a cottage, and found tea upon the table, with a large bowl of ſliced turnips. The

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maſter of it, a poor labourer, informed me, that his family had been deſtitute of bread many days, for which, one of his ſubſtitutes was that which I ſaw.

Inſtead of a premium propoſed for the encouragement of the culture of early potatoes, it might be more uſeful to exempt from tithes ſuch crops as ſhould be taken up for conſumption in the firſt months of the ſummer. The early kinds of potatoes, which are ſufficiently productive, ſhould be indulged with the moſt favourable ſoils and ſituations, that can be procured, and every means ſhould be employed to forward a crop. Tracts of country, partial to their growth, ſhould be appropriated to them; and ſuch will be found every where within a diſtance ſufficient, to admit of the carriage of this root to thoſe parts, which cannot produce an early crop.

It is neceſſary to loſe no time in preparing ground for them. Sets may really become difficult to procure for the purpoſe, but as potatoes are too dear for the poor to purchaſe at the preſent time, the immediate collection of them would not materially add to the preſent diſtreſs; therefore an agency ſhould be immediately appointed, to procure the proper ſorts for a general early crop of this valuable vegetable.

As to the ſuggeſtion of commons for growing this root in great abundance the enſuing ſummer, noticed in your letter, it would certainly be eligible, to ſelect certain parts of thoſe of ſuitable quality, to pare and burn them early, if ſpring permit, and with the aſhes (other manures, as dung or lime, would be uſeful along with the aſhes) to grow potatoes upon them: or ſuch ſuitable plots might be dug or plowed, and ſet

with

with potatoes in the uſual modes; or any ſort of waſte land, which ſuits the growth of potatoes, by road ſides, in woods, on banks of rivers, &c. might be employed for the purpoſe. A deſign of this ſort could eaſily be conducted by the agency propoſed, authorized by the legiſlature, and inveſted with ſuch temporary powers as the occaſion might require. In a time of famine, it could not be conſidered a violation of the laws relative to property, to give permiſſion, even to the agencies of diſtant diſtricts, of growing a few acres of potatoes upon an uncultivated common.

A greater difficulty occurs, how to ſave from treſpaſſes the crop grown upon ſuch commons. But I apprehend, a temporary ſod fence, coped with ſtones, and duly watched, might be ſufficient. However, in expoſed ſituations, commons would not

be favourable to the growth of an early crop; and, in my opinion, a more ſure and eligible mode of growing great quantities of early potatoes will, under the following head, be pointed out. Land, intended to be pared and burned for turnips, will be more uſefully reſerved for potatoes, if ſpring permit early firing of the ſods.

In regard to the third head, to wit, a degree of compulſion, ſimilar to preſſing, propoſed to be employed in procuring an extraordinary ſupply of food for the poor, that is, any who ſtand in abſolute need of it, the enſuing ſpring or ſummer:——— The legality of the meaſure may be diſputed, but the principle of it, and the neceſſity for it, are at leaſt as valid as the preſſing of ſailors in time of war; I therefore propoſe, for the purpoſe of growing early potatoes, and, if uſeful and neceſſary,

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any other crop, actually to preſs every where a ſufficient quantity of the beſt arable lands, in the moſt favourable ſituations for producing them, and to recompenſe the owner of ſuch lands by the ſale of the crop, and by the advancement of public money. In preſſing ground by this mode, the preſſing of the means of culture, and ſuch dung as may be wanted, is a neceſſary conſequence.

But more eſpecially the preſſing of milk is recommended, which, ſingly, would be a great means of removing the diſtreſs apprehended; that is, empowering the different agencies, to hinder milk from being made into butter and cheeſe, as they ſaw requiſite, in the dairies through the kingdom, and reſerving it for the uſe of the poor. This food may be conveyed to a conſiderable diſtance; and there would be

no difficulty in fixing upon a cheap mode of collecting it from different dairies, and conveying it where wanted, in the neighbourhood. It is plentiful through the kingdom; and where this is not the caſe, there is ſufficient graſs-land near great towns, upon which milch cattle may be brought and paſtured, for affording this valuable ſupply. Though this mode may, perhaps, not be thought practicable for the relief of the metropolis.

The farmer is ſuppoſed to be fully recompenſed for his milk, and proper regulations made, ſo as not to injure him in reſpect of rearing his calves: leſs butter and cheeſe would be made, but neither is an object of importance in the inſtance of a famine, or extreme general diſtreſs.

In regard to the fourth head, a general agency to be inſtituted for the purpoſe of carrying into effect whatever may be conducive to remedy the preſent evil.—This not only would be very uſeful, but indeſpenſably neceſſary, to execute the ſeveral means of a proper plan of general relief. It would be particularly ſerviceable for the purpoſes mentioned under the foregoing head; alſo to collect and diſpenſe ſupplies, or magazines of food, for the benefit of the poor, eſpecially in the later period of the preſent interval between the harveſts; to urge and incite all perſons in practiſing ſuch means as muſt prevent unneceſſary conſumption of food, but cannot be enforced by enacting laws for the purpoſe; to make application for private ſubſcriptions, awaken the ſenſibility of thoſe, whoſe circumſtances are competent to afford them, and render charity more humane, and generoſity more liberal,

liberal, by ſeeing the happy effects of their beneficence.

This agency, perhaps, ſhould be compoſed of thoſe inhabitants of the different pariſhes, who are of reſpectable characters and abilities; and two or more of theſe may be united, as will be moſt convenient. The different agencies ſhould cordially co-operate, in order to afford relief to thoſe parts of the country, which, from their ſituation, are more expoſed to experience the effects of the preſent calamity. They might be inſtituted at firſt, and continue to act under the ſanction of the magiſtrates. The powers with which it might be neceſſary to inveſt them, and proper rules for their conduct, ſhould be fixed by the legiſlature, and liberty allowed them of appointing proper perſons to execute the laborious part of their office.

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In regard to the fifth head, importation of different articles of food into the kingdom; —This cannot be too much attended to, nor the exportation of them too ſtrictly prevented. Whatever quantity of grain can be procured from abroad, ſhould be procured by the merchant, or, if requiſite, by government; they making every neceſſary exertion for the purpoſe. The different friendly powers ſhould be applied to for their aſſiſtance on the occaſion; and a free importation of all ſorts of proviſions permitted, by repealing, during a limited term, any laws, which prevent the introduction of them into the kingdom. Thus ſalt-meat and fiſh, dried herrings and cheeſe, might be procured, in conſiderable quantities, which would be very ſerviceable. A large ſupply of foreign peaſe, for boiling, would be of great relief; as would a great importation of rice, the reduction of it's preſent exorbitant

exorbitant price, by this means, and the more general uſe of it as food through the kingdom.

In regard to the ſixth head, extraordinary advance of public money for affording relief in the preſent diſtreſs;—This ſeems more than adviſable, it is abſolutely neceſſary. No very large ſum, when the purpoſe is conſidered, granted by the legiſlature, would render a ſuitable plan of relief certain of producing the moſt beneficial effects. It ſhould be diſtributed, where relief is moſt wanted, and moſt difficult to be procured. This aid of the legiſlature would not prevent private ſubſcriptions, which may and ſhould be promoted in a more effectual manner than they are at preſent, and would only be more liberal by the example of the legiſlature.

It will be ſufficient to mention, and leave to your conſideration, the propriety of granting a bounty, in order to procure a larger importation of certain articles of food. No doubt the preſent high prices of theſe are a powerful incentive to import them. On the other hand, foreign proviſions will riſe in price abroad, on the proſpect of a demand for them from this country.

In regard to the ſeventh head, the finding of proper ſuccedaneums within ourſelves, and not drawn from the vegetable kingdom, for ſupplying the deficiency of the produce of corn;—One effectual means would be, the appropriation of a part of the money granted by parliament, to the purchaſe of animal food, to be employed more generally than it is at preſent, in making ſoup for the relief of the lower orders in populous villages, as well as the greater towns and cities.

Another means would be to graze, or bring into forward condition, by meadowing leſs land, a greater proportion of young ſtock, ſheep or cattle; for theſe, in the later ſummer months, might be employed for ſoup, if not ſufficiently fat to be uſed as ſolid food. Procuring by the proper exertions an extraordinary ſupply from our home and foreign fiſheries, would be of great ſervice during the enſuing ſummer.

A voluntary reſtraint may be mentioned under the preſent head, a reſtraint impoſed upon the appetite, which, by the rich, is not rarely indulged at the coſt of the health and vigour of their conſtitutions. Suppers are a meal which many of them can diſpenſe with, until the return of harveſt, and which may be converted into a ſubſcription, for the relief of the lower orders. The army, eſpecially during a march, conſumes too freely,

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at this time of diſtreſs, the proviſions of the country; ſuch unneceſſary conſumption may be readily prevented by the attention of the officers.

In regard to the laſt of the heads propoſed, the reſtoration of peace;—It would, in many reſpects, unqueſtionably be conducive to the removal of the preſent evil. I am perſuaded, it is both in our power and our intereſt, to make it at the preſent period. I profeſs myſelf ſo far acquainted with the preſent ſubject, when I poſitively affirm, that the practicability is not actually perceived by government, as founded upon a ſolid baſis, of making a preſent peace, which will be more durable and advantageous to this country, than any peace hitherto experienced. Of conſequence it will be an honourable peace to all parties, and equally deſirable to the Britiſh government and people, and to the

French

French nation and their allies. I truſt, in this aſſertion, I ſhall not appear to you to be guilty of unpardonable preſumption, as you know I have paid ſome attention to the means of advancing the general welfare of the nation.

The introduction of the ſubject, though certainly pertinent to the deſign treated of, is, I confeſs, improper; for it cannot be expected, that the legiſlature will adopt or even attend to the propoſition. But I may be permitted on all occaſions, more eſpecially upon important ſubjects, ſuch as the reſtoration of peace, and a ſalutary and moderate reform of the parliamentary repreſentation of the people, to expreſs freely to you my warm and earneſt attachment to the true intereſts of my country. If only a ſingle hint, conveyed by the preſent deſign, ſhould be of ſervice, and tend to the relief of the

preſent

preſent diſtreſs, I ſhall feel an additional ſatisfaction to the honour I claim of being the ſole author of the preſent new and ſolid ſyſtem of finance, that of raiſing the ſupplies within the year, and the Income Tax. In vindication of this claim, which is ſo well and clearly founded, that it will hardly, and cannot juſtly be diſputed, "I find myſelf actually, and contrary to my inclinations, compelled, ſooner or later, to throw myſelf upon the juſtice and benignity of the public: for a gentleman of high ſtation has, in a late and much celebrated pamphlet, upon the ſtate of the finances, ſtudiouſly endeavoured to deny me this honour, which he well knows is my right; which is infinitely dear to me; which is my ſolace, under thoſe hardſhips, to which I have ſubjected myſelf, in conſequence of my ſincere and honeſt exertions to ſerve my country.

" Hos ego verſiculos feci, tulit alter honores.
" Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves;
" Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves.
" Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.
" Sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves."

I have the honour, Sir,

of being your much obliged

and moſt obedient ſervant,

GEORGE EDWARDS.

TO
ARTHUR YOUNG, ESQ.

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POSTSCRIPT.

IT will not have eſcaped your obſervation, indeed it has been expreſsly noticed, that the preceding plan is more immediately calculated to anſwer a caſe of univerſal diſtreſs, as approaching to a ſtate of famine, and occaſioned by actual failure of the neceſſary articles of food. However, when the ſubject is conſidered without unneceſſary alarm, there will not be found ſufficient grounds for the ſuppoſition, that ſuch a perfect ſtate of miſery can exiſt in the kingdom, before the return of harveſt: at leaſt, the means are abſolutely in our power, which are adequate to prevent it; and may readily be rendered effective, as, I truſt, will be evinced, by the foregoing deſign. But that actual and urgent diſtreſs at preſent per-

vades the kingdom, ariſing from the great difficulty of procuring the neceſſary articles of food; and that the ſame will continue, and, unleſs prevented, in the courſe of the year, become much greater, are truths which will be admitted on all hands.

But the difficulty of procuring the neceſſary articles of food ariſes from their high prices, as well as their deficiency. Nay the principal cauſe of the preſent evil is the high prices of the different articles of food, which, though abſolutely neceſſary to their ſubſiſtence, the abilities of a conſiderable part of the lower orders are not able to purchaſe. Even a very large extraordinary importation of corn will not be adequate, to remove the preſent diſtreſs. The great demand at home for this article, which will keep up until the harveſt, the high price at which it will be bought abroad, the

expence of importing it, and of inland carriage, and the profit of trade, which the merchant and his immediate cuſtomers will impoſe upon it, muſt neceſſarily cauſe it to be ſold at an exorbitant rate. Nor may the preſent high prices of the different neceſſary articles of food be materially reduced by the return of harveſt, at leaſt not immediately at this future period. With the preſent evil there co-operates another ſpecies of urgent diſtreſs, in the high and exceſſive prices of various other neceſſaries and comforts of life, occaſioned by the vaſt increaſe of taxes and parochial burdens, and by the great and immenſe capitals of numerous individuals, employed in monopoly.

Two views, therefore, preſent themſelves, as the means of removing or relieving the evil of the preſent caſe; to wit, an increaſe of the quantity of the neceſſary articles of food, to be procured immediately, or as

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ſoon as may be, by all the practicable means, which it is in our power to employ for the purpoſe; and the ſale of them at ſufficient reduced prices to thoſe individuals in the lower claſſes, who are not able to purchaſe them at their preſent high prices. A definite and adequate plan of relief, which will fully anſwer both theſe purpoſes, is neceſſary, and ſhould be deviſed, ſettled, and carried into immediate effect, by the legiſlature. It ſhould be ſo conſtructed, that it can conveniently be extended or contracted, as exigencies require; and be found ſufficient, provided the evil prove greater than is apprehended at preſent. The ſketch of ſuch a plan, as will embrace both thoſe views, I beg your leave to propoſe, and to take upon a ſomewhat reduced ſcale, from the deſign explained more at large in the preceding letter. This, however, ſhould be curtailed with proper caution.

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The agency therein recommended will be abſolutely neceſſary, to procure and diſpenſe the means of relief; for we muſt not think of committing this truſt to the common pariſh officers, nor will the magiſtracy be competent to the execution of it. Too much attention cannot be paid to ſeveral of the propoſals mentioned under the firſt head; eſpecially to that of making bread for ſale at a lower price, than that which correſponds to the preſent high price of corn, and diſtributing it to the poor, under proper regulations. It will unqueſtionably be very uſeful to grow the preſent year an extraordinary quantity of potatoes; and by ſome means or other this important object ſhould be carried into full effect. As there may be real occaſion in different parts of the country, there ſurely can be no ſerious objection urged to procuring, in the mode recommended, a ſupply of new, or even of old or ſkimmed milk.

milk. The importation of different articles of food cannot be too much promoted. As a ſuccedaneum for corn, if this cannot be procured in ſufficient quantity, more general relief ſhould be afforded the lower claſſes, and extended through the kingdom, by means of ſoup, made upon a proper economical plan.

A principal and leading view ſhould be to relieve thoſe in the lower orders, who are not able to purchaſe the neceſſaries of life at their preſent high prices. The means of accompliſhing this important and eſſential object are the voluntary ſubſcriptions of perſons, whoſe incomes are competent; and a parliamentary grant of public money, as a liberality, and in certain ſituations as a loan; which is a very practicable mode of relief, and abſolutely neceſſary in certain

certain parts of the country, as I ſhall ſhow immediately.

The legiſlature, which poſſeſſes the abſolute power of conferring, or withholding it, muſt feel it a duty, and its perſonal honour concerned, to be humane, compaſſionate, and liberal, to the people, under the preſſure of the preſent calamity; more eſpecially as it is the war, which is one of the principal cauſes of the diſtreſs. A war! commenced and continued upon political motives, of the propriety of which its members have themſelves decided; therefore a diſcretionary power ſhould, and will certainly be placed, in the hands of adminiſtration, to advance, according as exigencies may require, public money, for the purpoſe of affording relief to the preſent diſtreſs.

For private ſubſcriptions may be ſufficient in the rich cities, and fertile parts of the kingdom, to relieve the evil apprehended, or to prevent the neceſſity of materially encroaching upon the liberality of the legiſlature. But there may be parts of the country, and thoſe of conſiderable extent and population, which, from their general poverty, will require liberal aſſiſtance, or a loan, or both theſe, from government, where private ſubſcriptions cannot be procured; where, if procured, they would be inſufficient and ineffectual; where individual fortunes are too much oppreſſed, in other reſpects, as well as by the preſent calamity, to be able to afford adequate relief, by a pariſh rate, to the diſtreſſes of the poor, or labouring people; where the inhabitants in general cannot, by their induſtry, acquire the means of purchaſing, at their preſent high prices, the neceſſaries of life;

where they never would be able to pay for them, if theſe were advanced to them upon credit, at their preſent high prices. Such actually is the caſe of the mining country weſt of this place, mentioned in the beginning of my letter! Such is the real ſituation of the extenſive foreſt of Teeſdale! Such muſt be the ſituation of ſimilar parts of the kingdom!

FINIS.

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